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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

GANG WAR
PART TWO

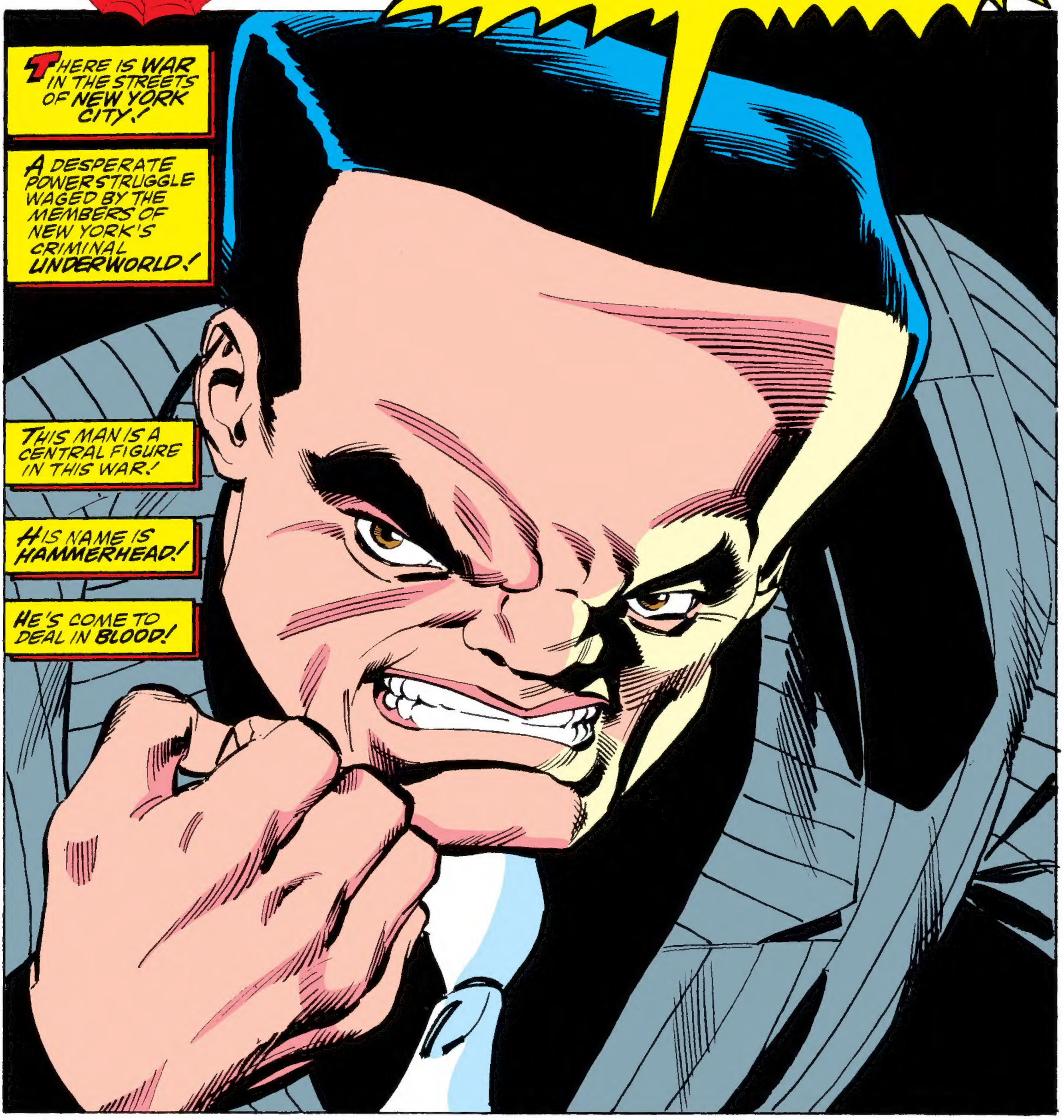
THE PUNISHER™ GETS INVOLVED!

ZECK+McLEOD

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

SPIDER-MAN

THE ARRANGER MUST DIE!!!


THERE IS WAR IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY!
A DESPERATE POWER STRUGGLE WAGED BY THE MEMBERS OF NEW YORK'S CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD!
THIS MAN IS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THIS WAR!
HIS NAME IS HAMMERHEAD!
HE'S COME TO DEAL IN BLOOD!

TOM DEFALCO
PLOT

JIM OWSLEY
SCRIPT

ALAN KUPPERBERG
PENCILS

JIM FERN
INKS

RICK PARKER
LETTERS

BOB SHAREN
COLORS

JIM SALICRUP
EDITOR

JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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YOU'RE *THE ROSE*, LEADER OF YOUR OWN CRIME SYNDICATE AND LONG-TIME PAIN-IN-THE NECK TO THE KINGPIN!

THE KINGPIN, WHOM, WE ALL KNOW, TOOK A POWDER SOME WEEKS AGO, TRIGGERIN' THIS *WAR* FOR CONTROL OF THIS BERG'S ACTION!

WAY I SEE IT, PAL, WE GOT SOME BUSINESS PROSPECTS HERE!

I AGREED TO SEE YOU, HAMMERHEAD, OUT OF RESPECT TO YOU AS A FELLOW BUSINESSMAN. OUR VARIOUS INTERESTS HAVEN'T CONFLICTED BEFORE, AND I DON'T SEE THEM DOING SO IN THE FUTURE...

...DESPITE THE OBVIOUS COMPLICATIONS BROUGHT ON BY YOUR *WAR*!

IT AIN'T JUST *MY* WAR, PAL! JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE SITTIN' IT OUT DON'T MAKE THIS MESS *MY* RESPONSIBILITY!

NO, PALLY, AS LONG AS THIS WAR CONTINUES, WE'RE *ALL* IN DANGER! THERE'S LEAD FLYIN' ALL *OVER* THE PLACE!

I WON'T EVEN *MENTION* HOW BADLY THIS FIGHT'S CRIPPLIN' *BUSINESS*!

YOU *DO* UNDERSTAND *BUSINESS*, DON'T'CHA?

WHAT IS YOUR *POINT*, HAMMERHEAD?

THE WAY TA END THIS WAR IS FOR THE GANGS TO ALL HAVE *ONE* BOSS! A STRONG ARM CAN UNITE THE GANGS AND SEW THIS MESS UP SO WE CAN ALL PUT THE HARDWARE AWAY AND GET BACK TO *BUSINESS*!

AND THIS LEADER WOULD BE--?

ME!

I'M THE MOST QUALIFIED! I GOT THE MOST EXPERIENCE, THE MOST CASH, AND THE MOST MUSCLE! I CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN, PALLY!

I'LL MAKE *YOU* MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND!

IN SPITE OF YOUR NEUTRALITY YOU'RE GONNA COME UNDER FIRE SOONER OR LATER! YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO CHOOSE SIDES!

YOU'RE SMART, YOU'RE YOUNG... YOU GOT A GOOD RACKET HERE! I CAN USE A GUY LIKE YOU!

I'M FLATTERED BY YOUR INTEREST, HAMMERHEAD. I'LL CONSIDER IT.

DON'T TAKE *TOO* LONG, PALLY! I'M GONNA MOVE ON THE ARRANGER SOON!

WHEN I DO, *I'LL* BE RUNNIN' THIS TOWN! THEN EITHER YOU'RE *WITH* ME...OR YOU'RE *AGAINST* ME!

I'LL TRY AND REMEMBER THAT, HAMMERHEAD. GOOD DAY.

THAT MAN IS STUCK IN AN EDWARD G. ROBINSON FILM.

ABSOLUTELY.

YUP.

HIS PROPOSAL, HOWEVER, *DOES* MAKE SENSE! YOU GIVE HIM AN ORAL AGREEMENT...

...THEN LET *HIM* TAKE THE RISK OF ASSASSINATING THE ARRANGER WHILE WE REST EASY!

BRRUNNGG!

STILL, WORD OF AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THAT... MISCREANT...AND MYSELF COULD BE EXTREMELY DAMAGING TO MY BUSINESS INTERESTS.

AFTER ALL, I DO TRAVEL IN THE FINER CIRCLES!

EXCUSE ME--ONE OF OUR GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS HAS JUST BEEN INVADED BY THOSE ANNOYING "BLUE BOYS"!

I HAVE NO CONFLICT WITH THIS NEW CRIME ORGANIZATION...THEIR ATTACK ON MY ESTABLISHMENT WAS FRIVOLOUS AND UNWARRANTED.

CONTACT THE HOBGOBLIN! ASK HIM TO COMMUNICATE THAT FACT TO THE BLUE BOYS!

THIS ISN'T GOOD! THE WAR'S GETTING WORSE! IT'S CLEAR I'M GOING TO BE FORCED INTO TAKING SOME *DIRECT INVOLVMENT* IN THIS INSANITY.

IT'S REPULSIVE! SO MANY LITTLE BOYS RUNNING AMOK WITH BIG GUNS! SO MANY INNOCENTS SUFFERING...

I MUST FIND A WAY TO KEEP FROM BEING DRAWN DOWN TO *THEIR* LEVEL. I MUST FIND A WAY TO NAVIGATE THIS CRISIS. AND, PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO GO ABOUT IT...

...IS WITHOUT THIS MASK!

MEANWHILE, ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE, A BRAWL IS IN **FULL SWING** AT A VIDEO PARLOR THAT IS IN ACTUALITY A **FRONT** FOR THE ROSE'S GAMBLING DEN!

THE BLUE BOYS HAVE INVADED-- UNPROVOKED! IT IS AN ACT OF AGRESSION DESIGNED TO DRAW THE RECALCITRANT ROSE INTO THE **MOB WAR!**

BOTH FACTIONS ARE IN FOR A SURPRISE.

HUH--?!

SPIDER-MAN!!

HEADS UP, CHUCKLES...

KRESH

...SPIDEY'S COMIN' THROUGH!

CAN'T YOU GUYS READ?!

THE SIGN SAYS, "PLAY AT YOUR OWN RISK!"

THAT MEANS YOU CAN'T GET **MAD** IF YOU LOSE YOUR QUARTER!

I KNOW, YOU'RE THINKING "IT'S NOT **HIS** MONEY."

WAP

WAP

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S NOT!

STILL, I THINK IT'S AWFULLY JUVENILE TO TAKE OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY!

KER-RUNCH!

AS FOR YOU "BLUE BOYS" I THINK YOUR CHOICE IS CLEAR...

...EITHER DITCH THE SILLY MASKS OR STOP BUYING YOUR SUITS FROM DEPARTMENT STORES!

I--

WHOA!

SPIDER-SENSE BUZZING LIKE MAD! BUT, I'D SPOTTED THE BLUE BOYS' GUNS-- WHAT ELSE COULD'VE--?

HOW DID HE MOVE SO FAST?!

KR-KOW!

ZAP MAN

THOSE MEN... SHOT... FROM ACROSS THE STREET...

BUT... WHO COULD'VE... WHO WOULD'VE...

NUTS! THE GANG WAR REALLY STINKS! SO MANY DIFFERENT GANGS POPPING OFF ROUNDS AT EACH OTHER...

...AND OF COURSE, *BOY GENIUS* THAT *I* AM, I DECIDE TO JUMP RIGHT IN THE *MIDDLE* OF IT ALL!

VIDEO GAMES

WAIT-- WHO'S THAT UP ON THE ROOF--?

-- *THE PUNISHER!!*

THAT... LUNATIC... IS WALKIN' AROUND *LOOSE* AGAIN?!

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, CAN'T SOMEBODY LOCK HIM UP IN SOME HAPPY HOME FOR *GOOD*?!

HE'S A HOMICIDAL LOONEY-TUNE! THE GUY RUNS AROUND AND *SHOOTS* ANYONE *HE* THINKS IS A CRIMINAL!

THIS GANG WAR MUST DRAW GUYS LIKE HIM FROM THE WOODWORK!

HE WENT AFTER THE *KINGPIN* A WHILE AGO--!*

POOM!

*SEE THE PUNISHER LIMITED SERIES. -- JIM.

I WONDER IF HE HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH KINGY'S DISAPPEARANCE?

AND, IF SO, WONDER IF I SHOULD THANK HIM OR PUNCH HIS LIGHTS OUT?!

EITHER WAY, BETTER NOT LOSE HAPPY BOY. HE NEEDS TO BE LOCKED AWAY FOR HIS OWN GOOD.. ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THESE MOBSTERS ON THE STREET!

THE GUY'S LIKE A FAT LADY IN A PIZZA SHOP!

AND HE DIDN'T REALLY EXPECT THAT GAS GRENADE TO STOP ME!

HEY, *PUNISHER--!* WAIT UP!

SPIDER-MAN! THIS ISN'T YOUR WAR!

IT'S **WAY** PAST YOUR NAP TIME!

TRUE, BUT YOU *KNOW* HOW I JUST LOVE TO BUTT IN ON A GOOD PARTY!

BY THE WAY, BIG GUY..

--IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT YOUR TRIGGER-HAPPY ROUTINE BRINGS YOU DOWN TO THE SAME LEVEL AS THE CROOKS YOU HATE SO MUCH?

ISN'T THAT JUST A *TAD* HYPOCRITICAL ...?

NO MORE SO THAN YOUR OPTING TO CHASE *ME* WHILE THOSE MEN BACK AT THE ARCADE *BLEED* TO DEATH!

I DON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND *YOUR* MOTIVES, SPIDER-MAN, BUT IT STRIKES *ME* AS RATHER HYPOCRITICAL OF *YOU* TO ONLY SAVE THE PEOPE YOU *WANT* TO SAVE!

HE'S *RIGHT!* I FORGOT ALL ABOUT THOSE GUYS HE *SHOT!* THEY'RE *CROOKS*, BUT IF I LET THEM DIE, I'M NO BETTER THAN *THEY* ARE!

DON'T GO AWAY, CHUCKLES! A LITTLE WEBBING OUGHTTA CONVINCE YOU TO STICK AROUND UNTIL I GET BACK--!

THWIPP!

THE FOOL MEANS WELL!

SOMEONE THAT POWERFUL AND THAT NAIVE IS A DANGER TO SOCIETY AND HIMSELF! SPIDER-MAN CAN'T POSSIBLY REALIZE HOW, EVERY TIME HE PUTS ON THAT MASK...

...HE PROTECTS THIS CITY'S CRIMINAL ELEMENT FROM THEIR OWN INBRED SYSTEM OF SELECTIVE ELIMINATION! INSTEAD OF LETTING THEM KILL EACH OTHER, HE TIES THEM UP AND DELIVERS THEM TO THE *POLICE*, WHO DELIVERS THEM TO THE *COURTS*... WHO PUT THEM BACK ON THE *STREET*. WELL, *I* AM THE ANSWER TO THAT PROBLEM, AND, MY YOUNG FRIEND NOTWITHSTANDING...

...I'M GOING TO CARRY OUT MY *MISSION*.

BUT FIRST I MUST BREAK FREE OF HIS INFERNAL WEBBING!

I'VE DONE ALL I CAN FOR THESE GUYS... CAN'T RISK MOVING THEM UNTIL SOME PROFESSIONAL MEDIC TYPES ARRIVE!

SO, I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS GANG WAR BUSINESS TO NOT STAND IDLY BY WHILE INNOCENTS ARE HURT OR KILLED IN THE CROSSFIRE!

IF I'D WALKED AWAY FROM THIS, THE PUNISHER WOULD'VE TAKEN *ALL* OF THESE GUYS OUT! THAT WOULD'VE MEANT NINE FEWER GUN-TOTING CREEPS ON THE STREETS!

I CAN'T WAIT TILL THIS GANG WAR IS ALL OVER AND I'VE CLEARED FLASH THOMPSON OF BEING THE HOBGOBLIN!

WOOP!

THEN I CAN *RETIRE* AND GO BACK TO BEING JUST PETER PARKER!

WOOP!

COPS ARE HERE-- I WONDER IF THEY'RE GOING TO SHOOT AT ME OR JUST YELL? EVER SINCE CAPTAIN KEATING TOOK OVER-- SINCE POOR *JEAN DEWOLFF* DIED...

WOOP! WOOP!

17 PCT

"... MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE *NYPD* HAS GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE!"

BACK OFF, WEB-SLINGER!

KEATING'S GIVEN US ORDERS TO *LOCK YOU UP* IF YOU GET IN OUR WAY!

NYPD

YOU'RE WELCOME. DON'T MENTION IT.

OOO

HUH--? SPIDER-SENSE'S GOIN' CRAZY! OH, NO...

THE PUNISHER'S GONE!

HE TORE THE *SLEEVE* OFF OF HIS UNIFORM!

NOW DOESN'T *THAT* JUST BRING THINGS *FULL CIRCLE?*

MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN, A LITHE FIGURE ASTRIDE A WHISPER-SILENT BAT-WING GLIDER RACES ACROSS TOWN.

*TO THE **CRIMINAL ELEMENT** OF THIS CITY HE IS LOATHED AND DESPISED. TO THEM HE IS DEATH ON A WING.*

HE IS... THE HOBGOBLIN!!

THE *PUNISHER* IS *BACK!*

I MISTOOK THAT LUNATIC FOR SPIDER-MAN THE OTHER NIGHT AND FIRED ON HIM! *

*LAST ISH. -- JIM.

NEVERTHELESS, HE HAS *SWORN WAR* ON ALL CRIMINALS! HIS ENTRANCE INTO THIS GANG WAR MAY COMPLICATE MATTERS. HE AND I MAY BE BROUGHT INTO *DIRECT CONFLICT!*

I MUST *AVOID* SUCH CONFLICT AT *ALL COSTS!* A STRUGGLE WITH THE PUNISHER WOULD BE, FOR ME, A NO-WIN SITUATION!

NOT THAT I *COULDN'T* DEFEAT THAT MADMAN *ANY* DAY...

... BUT THE PUBLICITY OF SUCH A SPECTACULAR BATTLE WOULD BE DAMAGING TO MY PLANS...

...AND *NOTHING* MUST INTERFERE WITH MY *ULTIMATE GOAL!*

NOTHING... AND NO *ONE!*

STILL LATER, AT A JUNKYARD USED BY THE UNDERWORLD TO PROCESS **STOLEN CARS**...

WATASH AUTO PARTS

BEWARE OF OWNER

THAT'S THE JOINT MY EMPLOYER, THE ARRANGER, WANTS ME TO HIT! IT SEEMS THE GANG OPERATING THIS PLACE HAS STOPPED PAYING THE KINGPIN'S MONTHLY CUT!

HE WANTS A *PUBLIC EXAMPLE* MADE OF THESE GUYS! THAT'S WHERE *I* COME IN!

EVENIN' GENTS-- MY NAME IS JACK O'LANTERN! LET'S PARTY!

FINE, PUMPKIN-HEAD!

BURN THIS GUY!!

OH GOSH OH GOSH OH GOSH...

WHAT THE HECK IS *HAMMERHEAD* DOING HERE?

I'VE BEEN HANDLING THE GIGS *SOLO*... DIDN'T THINK I'D *NEED* MY PEOPLE TO BACK ME UP--

-- BUT ALONE, I'M *NO MATCH* FOR OL' *FLAT TOP* THERE!

COME BACK AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN, YA FREAK!

"...THE ARRANGER'S GONNA GET A BILL FROM ME LIKE HE'S NEVER SEEN!"

HOW MUCH LONGER, ARRANGER--?

WHEN IS KINGPIN COMING BACK?!

THINGS ARE GETTING OUT OF HAND--

SO FAR, PAL, YOU'VE BEEN ALL YAP AND NO ACTION. I HEAR THE PUNISHER'S GOTTEN INTO THIS THING!

YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW WHAT MY FOURTH QUARTER P&L SHEET LOOKS LIKE!

MY PEOPLE CAN'T WORK--

--UNLESS THINGS GET SETTLED! KINGPIN WOULD'VE DONE SOMETHING BY NOW!!

MR. FISK WOULD'VE HAD THAT DIGIT YOU ARE RUDELY JABBING AT MYSELF PRE-JUDICIOUSLY REMOVED FROM YOUR HAND.

I SHALL EXPECT NOTHING BUT CO-OPERATION FROM YOU GENTLEMEN AND YOUR RESPECTIVE ASSIGNS. ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO SETTLE THESE CONFLICTS AND PROMOTE NORMAL TRADE PRACTICES.

BUNNN

YES--?

MR. FISK TO SEE YOU, SIR... MR. RICHARD FISK!

THE KINGPIN'S SON?! WHAT'S HE DOING HERE? NOW?!

YOUNG MR. FISK HAS AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME, GENTLEMEN.

FOR NOW, THIS MEETING IS ADJOURNED.

MOMENTARILY...

NICE OF YOU TO *SQUEEZE ME IN,* ARRANGER. I MEAN, I *DID* COME TO SEE MY MOTHER THE OTHER NIGHT.*

RICHARD, YOUR MOTHER IS STILL QUITE *ILL*. YOUR FATHER LEFT *STRICT* INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING HER CARE. AS IT *IS* I'M AT RISK FOR ALLOWING THIS VISIT.

*LAST ISH. -- JIM.

I *KNOW* YOU, ARRANGER.

YOU DON'T GO TO THE *BATHROOM* WITHOUT MY DEAR FATHER'S OKAY.

WHEN YOU CHAT WITH HIM NEXT, BE SURE AND TELL HIM I STILL HATE HIS GUTS.

YOUR GIFT FOR COLORFUL LINGUISTICS IS ENVIABLE.

YOU'RE A PIP, YOURSELF, ARRANGER.

YOU MAY HAVE TEN MINUTES, NO MORE.

WHO-- WHO ARE YOU...?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, MOTHER... IT'S JUST ME, RICHARD.

YOUR *SON.*

M... MY *SON*... I... I... DON'T KNOW YOU...

I'M AFRAID...

SO AM I, MOTHER. THIS IS A *DANGEROUS* GAME I'M PLAYING...

...A LOT OF RISK INVOLVED. I GET AFRAID *SOMETIMES*... A *LOT* OF TIMES.

THEN I REMEMBER I HAVE YOU. YOU HAVE ME. WE HAVE EACH OTHER.

THEN I KNOW EVERYTHING'S GOING TO WORK OUT. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

SOMETIME LATER...

NO SIGN OF THE PUNISHER... NOT THAT I REALLY EXPECTED TO FIND HIM. GUN-TOTING NUT CASES ARE USUALLY ***REAL*** GOOD AT MELTING INTO THE WOODWORK!

AT LEAST THE PUNISHER SEEMS TO ***CARE*** ABOUT THE INNOCENTS WHO COULD BE HURT DURING HIS LITTLE CAMPAIGNS! IT'S THOSE RECKLESS MOB IDIOTS I'M AFRAID OF!

THE KIND OF HUMAN FILTH WHO DOESN'T EVEN ***CARE*** WHO GETS HIT IN THE CROSS-FIRE! IT'S ***THOSE*** GUYS WHO'VE MADE ME DECIDE TO RIDE GANG WAR OUT AS SPIDER-MAN...

...DESPITE MY DECISION TO HANG UP MY TIGHTS FOREVER! WELL, IF THERE ***IS*** A SILVER LINING TO THIS MESS, IT'S THAT NO ONE WAS ***KILLED*** IN TODAY'S SHOOTOUT...

...AND THAT I'D MANAGED TO HAVE MY ***AUTOMATIC CAMERA*** CLICKING AWAY THE WHOLE TIME! AND, FOR ***THIS*** STARVING PHOTOGRAPHER, THIS ROLL OF FILM MEANS ONE THING...

...***RENT*** MONEY.

SOON, IN THE DAILY BUGLE'S CITY ROOM...

HEY-- ***KATE!*** I'VE GOT SOME ***GREAT SHOTS*** OF THAT SHOOT-OUT AT THE VIDEO ARCADE THIS MORNING--

WELL, I'LL TAKE A LOOK, PETER, BUT DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH!

UPI PHOTOGS WERE CRAWLING ALL OVER THAT SCENE MOMENTS AFTER IT BEGAN. I'VE GOT A ***STACK*** OF SHOTS TO CHOOSE FROM AND, CONSIDERING ALL THE ***OTHER*** FIREFIGHTS BREAKING OUT NOWADAYS...

...***THIS*** ONE REALLY ISN'T THAT BIG A DEAL. I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, PARKER. IF YOU'D RAN ***STRAIGHT OVER*** I MIGHT'VE RUN ***YOUR*** SHOTS.

INSTEAD, YOU TOOK YOUR COFFEE BREAK, OR WHATEVER.

I WAS SEARCHING FOR THE PUNISHER-- BUT HOW DO I TELL HER THAT?!

I ***REALLY*** NEED TO GET INTO ANOTHER LINE OF WORK...

HEY-- PETER--!

EH--? OH, HI, ANN. ISN'T THAT **BETTY LEEDS'** DESK...?

YEAH, BUT BETTY CALLED IN SICK. NOT THAT SHE'S **SICK**, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT...

UH... I'M NOT FOLLOWING YOU...

WELL, WHAT WITH HER MARRIAGE FALLING APART AND THE POLICE HUNTING DOWN FLASH THOMPSON-- HER BOYFRIEND-- IT'S NO WONDER!

I'LL BET HER HUSBAND NED CALLS IN SICK TOMORROW, THOUGH. HE'S IN ROBBIE'S OFFICE GETTING CHEWED-OUT RIGHT NOW.

I **REALLY** DON'T NEED THIS NOW...

LOOK, ANN... I'VE REALLY GOTTA SPLIT...

WHY DON'T YOU CALL ME SOMETIME, SPORT?

MEANWHILE, IN JOE ROBERTSON'S OFFICE...

...EMBARRASSING SITUATION, NED. YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME OUT IN THE FIELD, BUT YOU HAVEN'T PRODUCED ENOUGH HARD COPY TO JUSTIFY IT. YOU'VE TOLD YOUR WIFE BETTY YOU'VE BEEN ON UNDERCOVER ASSIGNMENTS...

...ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN OUT BY **ME**...

NED, I'M YOUR FRIEND, BUT I'M ALSO THE *BUGLE'S* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO COME CLEAN WITH ME.

ALL RIGHT, ROBBIE. ALL RIGHT.

I LIED.

I TOLD MY WIFE THOSE THINGS TO HIDE THE FACT THAT I'VE BEEN FEELING... WELL... INADEQUATE. I'VE BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY THE BUGLE'S "STAR" REPORTER... **BEN URICH.**

BEN GETS THE FRONT PAGE. **BEN** GETS THE BYLINE. **BEN** IS ALL MY "FELLOW REPORTERS" TALK ABOUT WHEN WE GET TOGETHER!

IT SICKENS ME.

SO, FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS I'VE PUT **ALL** MY TIME AND **ALL** MY ENERGY INTO RESEARCHING A NEW STORY. A **BIG** STORY, ROBBIE.

PULITZER MATERIAL.

WE'RE TRYING TO RUN A NEWSPAPER, SON. NOT WIN PRIZES.

ALL I NEED IS CERTAIN INFORMATION ON SOVIET SPY ACTIVITIES DURING THE COLD WAR OF THE EARLY SIXTIES...

...AND I'LL BE READY TO LET YOU IN.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH **NOW?**

WITHOUT THE *FACTS* TO BACK ME UP, THIS'LL JUST SOUND LIKE A BAD *SPY NOVEL!* NO, ROBBIE, WHEN I GIVE THIS TO YOU, IT'LL BE *BULLET-PROOF!*

THEN MAYBE I WON'T HAVE TO HEAR BEN'S NAME SO BLASTED MUCH.

WHOOPS-- SORRY, FELLAS.

IT'S OKAY, BEN. NED AND I WERE DONE, ANYWAY.

HOT FLASH FOR YOU, ROBBIE-- WORD ON THE STREET IS *HAMMER-HEAD* PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON *THE ARRANGER!*

LOOKS LIKE HAMMERHEAD WANTS TO TAKE OUT THE KINGPIN'S YES-MAN AND TAKE OVER. EITHER HE FIGURES THE KINGPIN'S *NOT* COMING BACK, OR THAT HE CAN HANDLE HIM IF HE *DOES.*

IF THIS ARRANGER HIT *DOES* GO DOWN, THE *ROSE* WILL BE NEXT.

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT, BEN?

THE *ROSE* WILL BE THE LAST MAJOR PLAYER IN TOWN TO CHALLENGE HAMMERHEAD. I'M *SURE* HAMMERHEAD'S DISCOUNTING ALL THE KINGPIN'S LIEUTENANTS AS OVER-EDUCATED DOPES.

THE *ROSE* HAS A LOT OF MUSCLE *TOO,* BEN. HE'S NOT JUST GOING TO ROLL OVER FOR HAMMER-HEAD.

I TELL YOU *ONE* THING, THOUGH. NO MATTER WHICH WAY THIS GANG WAR GOES... THIS TOWN'S IN FOR SOME *REAL FIREWORKS.*

LATER...

I FELT REALLY SKEEVY EAVESDROPPING OUTSIDE ROBBIE'S DOOR LIKE THAT, BUT I COULDN'T HELP IT!

SO, HAMMERHEAD'S PLANNING TO KILL THE ARRANGER! BUT, WHEN? WHERE? AND, THE BEST QUESTION OF ALL... SHOULD I EVEN *CARE*?

IF THESE JERKS BLOW EACH OTHER AWAY, THE GANG WAR WILL END. IF THE GANG WAR ENDS, I CAN GET BACK TO LOOKING FOR FLASH THOMPSON.

IF I FIND FLASH THOMPSON, I CAN HANG UP MY WEBS AND LIVE A NORMAL LIFE!

THE ARRANGER WORKS FOR THE KING-PIN. OVER THE YEARS, I'M SURE HE'S "AR-RANGED" DOZENS OF MURDERS FOR HIS BOSS!

KRKOW

MAYBE THE LITTLE RAT'S GETTING WHAT HE DESERVES! STILL, I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE WHERE AND WHEN OF ALL THIS... INNOCENTS MAY BE INVOLVED!

SO, I STILL THINK I SHOULD BUT IN AND TRY TO KEEP THIS NIGHTMARE FROM CLAIMING *MORE* INNOCENT VICTIMS!

STILL LATER...

...SO EVERYTHING'S SET, BOSS! THE ARRAN-GER'S CALLED A GENERAL MEETING OF ALL THE KINGPIN'S LIEUTENANTS FOR *TONIGHT*! MY BOYS'VE STAKED OUT THE AREA...

...WE CAN FINALLY *NAIL* THE WORM!

YOU *SURE*, MOE? YOU *REAL* SURE?!?

I'M...VERY... SURE...

YOU'D BETTER BE, PAL! I GOT A *LOT* RIDIN' ON THIS!

THE ROSE WILL *HAVE* TO LET THE HIT GO DOWN... IF HE SAYS *ANYTHING* EVERYBODY'S GONNA *KNOW* HE WAS IN ON IT FROM THE BEGINNING!

YEAH, HE'S GOTTA SIT BACK AND WATCH ME BLOW THE ARRANGER'S FAT FACE OFF. AND THEN, THE ROSE HIMSELF WILL BE NEXT!

STILL LATER...

HOTEL

MY SOURCES TELL ME THE ARRANGER'S SET HIS BIG MEETING FOR *TONIGHT!*

PARKING

THE HEADS OF THE CITY'S MAJOR GANG WILL ALL BE THERE.

ELIMINATING THEM WILL *CRIPPLE* MOB ACTIVITY ACROSS THE NORTHERN SEABOARD. GRANTED, IT WILL ONLY BE A *TEMPORARY* CRIPPLING...

...BUT IT WILL BE A *LESSON* AND *EXAMPLE* FOR ANYONE WHO DECIDES TO SET UP SHOP IN THE YEARS TO COME!

I HOPE THE WALL-CRAWLER DOESN'T SHOW UP TONIGHT, BUT IF HE DOES...

I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF *HIM*, TOO.

AFTER ALL, IN EVERY WAR...

...THERE ARE UNFORTUNATE *CASUALTIES.*

MIDNIGHT.

GANGLORDS FROM THE CITY'S MAJOR CRIME NETWORKS BEGIN ARRIVING AT THE KINGPIN'S PARK AVENUE OFFICES FOR THEIR CONFERENCE WITH THE ARRANGER!

WHILE, ON THE ROOFTOPS, SURROUNDING THE BUILDING, THE KINGPIN'S MEN STAND WATCH...

MMMPHFF--!

UHHGNNN--!

SOK

POW

MEANWHILE, NOT FAR AWAY...

WELL, I'VE BLOWN MY ENTIRE DAY LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF FLASH THOMPSON OR THE PUNISHER! PUNISHER I CAN FIGURE, BUT FLASH--

--FLASH MUST'VE SKIPPED TOWN! THAT, OR HE ACTUALLY *IS* THE HOBGOBLIN... THE CRIME HE'S BEEN ACCUSED OF! I CAN'T BELIEVE THE HOBGOBLIN COULD ACTUALLY BE SOMEONE I'VE EVER *MET*--LET ALONE ONE OF MY OLDEST *FRIENDS*!

SAY... I'M OVER BY THE KINGPIN'S OFFICE! I WONDER IF THAT'S AN ACCIDENT?

...OR IF I'M SUBCONSCIOUSLY *DETERMINED* TO INVOLVE MYSELF IN THIS ARRANGER "CONTRACT" BUSINESS!

I HAVEN'T EVEN A *CLUE* AS TO *WHERE* OR *WHEN* THIS HIT IS...

--WHOA!

... NOW THERE'S A CLUE IF I'VE EVER SEEN ONE! AN UNCONSCIOUS THUG... ONE OF KINGPIN'S GUARDS!

THE HIT'S GOING DOWN TONIGHT-- RIGHT NOW-- NO MORE WAFFLING, WEB-HEAD! DECISION TIME!

WHILE, INSIDE THE KINGPIN'S SPACIOUS PENTHOUSE HEAD-QUARTERS...

--SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, ARMEL.

JUST HOPE YOU'VE GOT SOME CONCRETE SOLUTIONS TO OUR PROBLEMS, ARRANGER. THE KINGPIN'S ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD MANAGER...

...THIS STRANGE DISAPPEARING ACT ISN'T LIKE HIM AT ALL.

I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE BIT, BOSS.

WHY ARE WE HANGIN' OUT IN THE ENEMY CAMP? THAT'S LIKE ASKIN' TO GET BLOWN AWAY!

MR. VARLEY, YOU ARE WELL AWARE OF THE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS THE ROSE HAS IMPLEMENTED FOR TO-NIGHT'S PROCEEDINGS. THOSE NOTWITHSTANDING, THERE IS ALSO A MEASURE OF COMFORT TO BE HAD...

...BY THE HIGH-CALIBRE SMALL ARMS CONCEALED ON OUR RESPECTIVE PERSONS.

ROSE--! NICE OF YOU TO MAKE IT!

I KNOW YOU AND KINGPIN AIN'T EXACTLY BUDDIES--

--NEITHER ARE WE ADVERSARIES, MR. WILLIAMS. THE MAJORITY OF MY BUSINESS INTERESTS DO NOT CONFLICT WITH HIS...

...AND WHERE THEY DO THE APPROPRIATE HONORARIUMS ARE PAID. I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR WHAT THE ARRANGER HAS TO SAY...

"...AND HOW HE INTENDS TO SOLVE OUR MANY PROBLEMS!"

ONE SHOT.

THE ROOM GOES UP IN A FIREBALL.

THE CRIME ORGANIZA-TIONS ACROSS THE EAST COAST FALL APART.

THE GANG WAR ENDS.

WHAT--?!?

BOOM

HOLEE--!
--AN EXPLOSION!
LEMME OUTTA HERE!
MOVE IT!

DON'T PANIC! LET'S KEEP OUR HEADS AND...MOE?! WHAT ARE YOU--
MOE, THIS CONDUCT IS EXTREMELY DAMAGING TO OUR BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP...
I'M THROUGH TAKIN' ORDERS FROM YOU, EGGHEAD!

HAMMERHEAD SAYS "HI"!
HOBGOBLIN... STRIKE NOW!!

WHAT--? JACK O'LANTERN ON ONE SIDE--HOBGOBLIN ON THE OTHER... ?!
KRESH

N... NO... BEIN' BLASTED... BY BOTH OF 'EM...!
YYEEAARGGH!

THAT WAS QUITE UNNECESSARY, ROSE. AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAD THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND.

NEVERTHELESS, I AM PUZZLED BY YOUR CONCERNED INTERVENTION... ?

LET'S JUST SAY I'D BE INTERESTED IN ***STRENGTHENING*** OUR TIES, ARRANGER.

IT IS, OF COURSE IN OUR COMMON INTEREST TO DO SO.

I AGREE. THEN, OUR RESPECTIVE ***ENFORCERS...***

...WILL HAVE TO WORK ***TOGETHER.*** GENTLEMEN... ?

SHAKE THE MAN'S ***HAND,*** HOBGOBLIN.

ROSE, WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU--

LATER.

GENTLEMEN, THE AUTHORITIES ARE EN ROUTE, WITH REGARDS TO THE EXPLOSIONS HEARD OUTSIDE... MOE'S COHORTS, NO DOUBT.

I SUGGEST WE ADJOURN THIS UNTIL A FUTURE DATE.

EXIT

MEAN-WHILE...

C'MON, PUNISHER... GROW UP! YOU CAN'T RUN AROUND SHOOTING PEOPLE WITH BAZOOKAS!

THERE *ARE* ZONING LAWS Y'KNOW!

SPIDER-MAN, YOU IDIOT! YOU'VE RUINED *EVERY-THING!*

I COULD'VE ENDED THIS WAR... *STOPPED* THE KILLING--

--WITH *MORE* KILLING, RIGHT? YOU'RE A REAL *BRIGHT GUY*, PUNISHER!

YOU'RE PUTTING OUT A FOREST FIRE WITH A FLAME THROWER!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *YOU* AND *THEM*?!

THE DIFFERENCE IS *I'M* RIGHT AND *THEY'RE DEAD!*

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

THE MAN IS NUTS!

HE'S ALSO LOSING WHAT LITTLE COOL HE HAS LEFT!

I DOUBT HE'D ACTUALLY TRY TO *KILL* ME... HE'S ALWAYS DRAWN THE LINE AT HARMING INNOCENTS...

...BUT TO *HIM*, AM I AN "INNOCENT"?

I'LL HAVE TO ASK HIM AFTER HE'S SAFELY BACK AT THE NUT-HOUSE!

B-KOWW!

FLYING BRICKS NAILED HIM... BETTER STAY AFTER HIM, THOUGH...

...IF HE GETS HALF THE CHANCE, HE'LL--

--PUNCH HIMSELF IN THE CHEST...?!

SPIDER-SENSE SCREAMING...

GAS!!

PPFWOOM!

SOME KIND OF... HARNESS... UNDER THE PUNISHER'S OUTFIT...

MANIAC... THAT BLAST OBVIOUSLY... HURT *HIM* JUST AS MUCH... JUST AS MUCH...

...JUST AS MUCH...*

SORRY... I HAD... TO DO THAT... SPIDER-MAN...

...BUT I CAN'T LET YOU... CAPTURE ME...

...NOT WHILE THERE'S CRIME IN THE STREETS...

... NOT WHILE THE WAR GOES ON.

NEXT: THE RECKONING!

Shadowcat